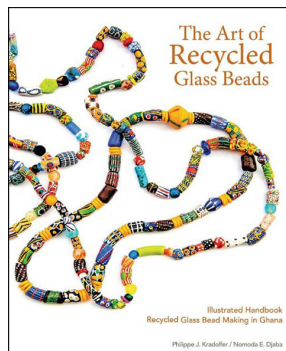


## BOOK REVIEW

### *The Art of Recycled Glass Beads.*

**Philippe J. Kradolfer and Nomoda E. Djaba.** Ghana-Art Publications and EPP Book Services, North Salt Lake, UT, USA. 2020. 144 pp., 858 color figures. ISBN: 978-1-7923-2241-9. \$25.00 (hardcover).

Author and photographer Philippe J. Kradolfer and beadmaker Nomodo E. Djaba have partnered to document the process of beadmaking in Ghana. Djaba is best known by the name Cedi in the bead world and has been making beads for over 40 years. His work and experience are the main focus of the book. This could make one believe that the book is just an elaborate way to promote Cedi and his bead business, but it is quite the opposite. It is a comprehensive overview of beadmaking techniques. Many beadmakers prefer to keep this type of information to themselves, as we, for example, know from the history of Venetian glass. Instead, the authors have chosen to generously share Cedi's knowledge with anyone who wants to learn more or even try some techniques for themselves.



The first two chapters describe the history of beads in Ghana and the significance of beads in traditional Ghanaian culture. They are illustrated with wonderful images and documentation of the use of the beads locally. Many of the beads made in Ghana are inspired by the colors and patterns of lampworked trade beads that were made in Venice and the Czech Republic and, at first glance, they often resemble Venetian millefiori beads. On closer inspection, they are decorated glass beads made from recycled glass.

The book describes all the different types of recycled glass beads created by Cedi and his workshop in Odumase

Krobo, Ghana. Examples are beads from crushed glass, beads from melted seed beads, and beads with intricate patterns made from powdered glass. The amount of detail in describing the process is remarkable: how to make the molds from the right type of clay, shrinkage rates for the different glass types, making the kiln from the clay of termite mounds, using cassava stalks that burn away for the holes, and decorating the beads with different glazes.

The photography in the book is outstanding in explaining the details of the different production steps, but also showing the beads worn in a traditional way. Several pages are filled with a grid of close-up bead images, illustrating the variety of colors, techniques, and decoration in a gallery format. For example, chapter 13 on “Recycled Seed Beads” explains how modern seed beads from Asia and Europe are used to create a new type of bead. The seed beads are placed in a mold creating a wide range of color combinations. The gallery portion of the chapter contains two spreads of more than 50 close-up photographs of all the different beads made from seed beads, sometimes combined with crushed glass.

A point of contention concerns chapter 17, “Chevron, Rosetta or Star Beads.” Chevron canes are generally created with the use of a glass furnace. Though Cedi has made beads with a chevron pattern by using recycled glass in a collaborative project with glass artist and chevron beadmaker Art Seymour, most of the chevron beads in the book are identified by bead collectors as being made from Chinese cane. Communication with Kradolfer has not clarified this issue.

By covering the entire 40-year career of beadmaking by Cedi, even including a chapter on his fairly recently acquired skill of making lampwork beads, it has become a great testament to the skill it takes to make glass beads, no matter which method is chosen. *The Art of Recycled Glass Beads* will be an asset for collectors and researchers with an interest in African bead production and bead culture, but also to those with an interest in beadmaking techniques.

Floor Kaspers  
Independent Researcher  
The Hague  
The Netherlands  
flookaspers@me.com